

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	COR-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CA-00	CIAE-00
	INL-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	UTED-00	VC-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-00	NIMA-00	EPAU-00
	PA-00	PER-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SGAC-00	SP-00	TRSE-00	EVR-00	FMP-00	EPAE-00	IIP-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00
	SWCI-00	/001W					

-----DEB2C1 150425Z /38

FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1324
INFO AMEMBASSY HANOI
ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 000383

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

/ / / / / / / C O R R E C T E D C O P Y / / / / / /

ADDED ADD'L COMMENT IN PARA 6.

/ / / / / / / C O R R E C T E D C O P Y / / / / / /

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [KIRF](#) [PHUM](#) [VM](#) [HUMANR](#) [HIV](#) [AIDS](#) [RELFREE](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH HCMC DEPUTY PARTY SECRETARY

1. (SBU) The Ambassador, accompanied the CG, PolOff and notetaker, met HCMC Deputy Party Secretary Le Hoang Quan at HCMC's Communist Party Headquarters on March 30. The Ambassador, noting the ongoing port call of the USS Gary to HCMC, said that he believed that the U.S.-Vietnam relationship had improved significantly in the 10 years since normalization. Quan agreed, saying that the overall climate in bilateral relations was positive, despite the fact that many Vietnamese believe that the U.S. must help address lingering war legacy issues. (Comment: a reference to the GVN's ongoing Agent Orange campaign. End Comment.) Quan agreed with the Ambassador that one important strength of our relationship was that the two sides increasingly are able to talk frankly with each other and to find ways to narrow areas of dispute. Quan said that the HCMC Party Committee welcomed dialogue, not just with the Ambassador and the Consul General, but also with working-level officers of the Consulate.

2. (SBU) Quan confirmed that HCMC would hold its provincial Party Congress in November 2005. The Party's organizational and policy deliberations are underway. Quan anticipated that the HCMC Party Congress would focus on strengthening and extending economic reform and on ways to hasten infrastructure development. While the city has averaged 11 percent GDP growth since 2001, Quan said the city wants to do better. In the Party's view, HCMC must improve public administration and provide a better legal framework for both foreign and domestic investors to operate more freely. The Party also will focus on methods to tackle pressing urban development issues such as mass transit. Quan noted that while technically the HCMC delegation has the same status as any other provincial delegation attending the 10th Party Congress, in practice, HCMC's position a major economic and social center would give its proposals added weight.

3. (SBU) The Ambassador stressed that the overseas Vietnamese community can play a vital role in spurring HCMC's economic growth and offered his assistance in building bridges between the Viet Kieu community in the U.S. and Vietnamese authorities. The Ambassador told Quan that, during a recent visit to San Francisco, he met with the Vietnam- America NGO Network, an organization that represented American Vietnamese interested in providing assistance to Vietnam. Quan said that the GVN recognizes the value of the Viet Kieu to the Vietnam's economy and society and it's clear policy is to facilitate their return both to visit and do business. He acknowledged that the GVN still must work hard to overcome opposition from some within the Viet Kieu community. However, while the GVN would continue to welcome the overseas Vietnamese, he warned that it will, "not tolerate those who take advantage of this situation to cause problems for us".

4. (SBU) The Ambassador told Quan that he applauded the efforts of HCMC to combat HIV/AIDS. He emphasized that the United States was committed to assist HCMC -- and Vietnam writ large -- in its fight against the disease. The Ambassador applauded HCMC's efforts to enlist the support of faith-based groups in this effort. He observed that all Vietnamese, particularly those in government, needed to be more proactive in fighting the stigma and discrimination of HIV/AIDS victims. Quan emphasized that with its very large drug addict population, HCMC was on the front lines of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Vietnam and expressed his gratitude for the USG financial and technical support.

5. (SBU) The Ambassador observed that the U.S. and Vietnam had made progress in resolving some differences over religious freedom and human rights issues. New policies and legislation had

expanded opportunities for religious practice, particularly in areas such as HCMC. However, elsewhere, problems remained more serious and required continued GVN and Party attention. The Ambassador stressed that all Vietnamese should be extended the opportunity to worship as they please, including the leaders of the United Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV). Quan emphasized that the GVN is committed to the spiritual well being of its citizens, and cited as an example increase in the number of churches and other places of worship in Vietnam since 1975. With regard to the UBCV, Quan said that the GVN recognized only the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha as the legal representative of Buddhists in Vietnam.

16. (SBU) Bio Note: This was Quan's first official meeting with a USG representative since he was elevated to HCMC Deputy Party Secretary four months ago. Although not as confident as his

SIPDIS
mentor, HCMC Party Secretary Nguyen Minh Triet, he was friendly, engaging and well briefed. In his early fifties, Quan does not dye his full head of gray hair, unusual behavior for a Vietnamese official. End Bio Note.

WINNICK

NNNN